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“Inconsistency,”

AND AN
OPEN LETTER
TO MY
CRITICS.

BY

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YARMOUTH, N. S.

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Why do the greatest Scholars translate Baptizo "To Immerse," and yet continue to practise Sprinkling?

"While Pastor of the Baptist Church in the village of O—— I received a call from the Pastor of the Presbyterian Church, of a somewhat remarkable character. He was a quiet, pleasant gentleman rather cool and reserved in manner a little inclined to have his own way, but honorable, noble, generous and kind. In all our acquaintance I had never seen him indignant at anything, until that particular day already alluded to, when to my great surprise, he was deeply agitated, and evidently very much offended. Without waiting to be seated, or even to remove his hat (he was usually a polite man), he cried, "Sir I called to ask you a question, and I want a direct answer—Yes or No—and I will not be put off with anything else."

The shock staggered me for a moment, but presently "Richard was himself again," and I gently prevailed on my friend to be seated. "Now, my dear brother," said I, when his hat was gracefully hanging on the rack, and he was settled in my old study chair, "ask as many questions as you please, and I will pledge you an immediate, straight, categorical reply. I will say Yes or No, or I don't know, or whatever other word or words the nature of your question may require. Please say freely all you have in your heart to say."

Looking me straight in the eye, and relaxing none of his firmness and fierceness of manner and tone, he replied: "Sir, did you tell Elder W——, a few days ago, that Dr. Lange translates Christ's word baptizing, by IMMERSING? Did you tell him, sir, that Lange translates John's words (Matt. 3. 11.) "I indeed baptize you with water," by the words, "I indeed IMMERSE you IN water?" Returning his intense gaze with interest, I replied: "Yes, sir, I told Elder W—— all that, and more of the same sort." "Why did you do it?" said he, his voice trembling with excitement. I replied, "Because I thought he ought to know it." Said he, "Now, sir, do you not know that Lange is a Pedo-baptist, a prominent divine and theologian in the Lutheran Church in

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Germany? Do you not know, sir, that he practises sprinkling?" "Certainly" said I, "that is all true, no one doubts it." "Yes" he replied "no one doubts it; but how, then, dare you make such statements about him, as you confess you did to a ruling Elder of my church? How dare you say that he translates BAPTIZO, to IMMERSE?"

"Why sir" I answered, "I dared to say, it because it is true." "True" he cried; "true, you surely do not mean to persist in your strange statement, after confessing that he practises sprinkling?" "Why not" said I, "when it is true? as you claim, he does practice sprinkling, but he also translates baptizo, and its derivatives to IMMERSE, and thereby confesses that Christ has commanded him, not to sprinkle, but to IMMERSE; and I have a right to state the fact—it is a public matter."

"I tell you," he replied, "there is some mistake about this." Your statement cannot be true. Dr. Lange is a good man, and a great man, and he would never do a thing so absurd."

"Mr. K——" said I, "have you Dr. Lange's work on Matthew in your Library?" "Why, yes, I have it," he replied. "Well then" I rejoined, "why did you not examine it before coming here to accuse me of misrepresentation?" "Why, sir" he said, "I knew it could not be true; and I could not believe you had really said so; and I thought, 'I will just run in and ask him about it and that will settle it.' Of course I might have looked into the book as you say, but of what use would that be? Dr. Lange is a Lutheran. He practises sprinkling habitually, and it is not possible that he translates BAPTIZO to IMMERSE, for that would condemn his own practise."

I did not reply to this, but taking Dr. Lange's work on Matthew from a shelf just behind me, I opened at Matthew, 3. 11., and handing the book to Mr. K——, I bade him read for himself. Then sitting down just in front of him, I watched his countenance as he read.

Poor fellow, I really pitied him. He grew red and pale by turns, and no wonder, for there he not only read, "I INDEED IMMERSE YOU IN WATER," but also, "HE THAT COMETH AFTER ME—SHALL IMMERSE YOU IN THE HOLY GHOST AND IN FIRE." And then followed

an elaborate explanation of immersion as the symbol of a complete regeneration, a change equivalent to a Death and Resurrection, and all that from the pen of a great and good man, who, contrary to his own translation of the Divine Word was in the habit of sprinkling, instead of immersing, as the Lord commands.

At last my friend looked up, the very picture of astonishment, and in a bewildered but an emphatic way, he said: "HOW CAN A MAN WRITE AS THIS MAN DOES, AND STILL CONTINUE TO PRACTISE SPRINKLING?" "Ah" said I "that is the problem; but you see that I was correct, do you not? You concede that my statements about this matter were true, do you not?"

"Oh, yes," he replied, your statements are true; and I most heartily confess the gross injustice I have so foolishly and unwittingly done you, and I earnestly beg your pardon for treating you as I did, I am very sorry for it indeed."

"Say no more about that, my dear brother," I responded, "I most heartily and fully forgive you, and I sympathize with you most deeply in your feeling of pain at the gross inconsistency of those men, who frankly confess that Jesus enjoins immersion, and then coolly keep right on SPRINKLING in His name." [F. M. IAMS.]

It seems strange that while such men as Dr. Lange and Dr. Schaff declare to the world that IMMERSION is the meaning of the original word used in the New Testament to represent the Baptism command by Christ and practised by His Apostles, that men who are infinitely inferior in scholarship and especially in a knowledge of that wonderful Greek language, take upon themselves to say, right in the face of their own great Scholars, that the original mode of baptism was NOT IMMERSION.

If their own great Scholars and thinkers declared that the original word means sprinkling, I would not wonder that their inferiors would follow their present mode of baptism.

A lady asked me the other day to answer this question. She said, "Mr Adams, some of my friends in Pedit-baptist churches, say if the great Scholars of our denomination declare that infant sprinkling is not in the New Testament, that they affirm there is neither a command nor an example

on which it can be founded, WHY DON'T THEY GIVE IT UP, AND PRACTISE WHAT THEY BELIEVE?"

Those Scholars who declare that IMMERSION was the original mode of baptism, and yet practise sprinkling, certainly HAVE MORE REGARD FOR THEIR SCHOLARSHIP THAN THEY HAVE FOR THE LORD'S COMMANDS. They are careful to obtain the approval of MAN for their correct translation of the New Testament, but they are not anxious to have the approval of GOD for obedience to known duty. Most, if not all of them, are Tutors in rich and powerful Universities or Colleges, receiving large salaries. It seems that they are more willing to practice what they KNOW to be error, and retain their financial advantages; than practice what they KNOW to be the truth, and sacrifice their emoluments.

Look at such a man as Dean Stanley, one of the most brilliant men that ever adorned the English Episcopal Church. After proving most conclusively that the Baptist plunged the people beneath the river Jordan, he says in his "Palestine;" "He (John) came baptizing, that is signifying to those that came to him, as he plunged them UNDER the rapid torrent, the forgiveness and forsaking of their former sins;" and "There began that sacred rite, which has since spread throughout the world, through the *vast baptisteries* of the Southern and Oriental churches, gradually dwindling to the *little founts* of the North and West; THE PLUNGES BENEATH THE WATER diminishing to the *few drops* which by a *wise exercise of christian freedom*, are now in most churches the sole representative of the full stream of the descending river." pages 312-313.

The Dean has furnished us with probably the most effective reason, why he and the many great scholars believe that the original mode of baptism was IMMERSION, and YET PRACTICE SPRINKLING. "BY A WISE EXERCISE OF CHRISTIAN FREEDOM." That is, that man has assumed the "FREEDOM" to alter the WORD of GOD, to suit his own convenience. That he has the "FREEDOM" to substitute sprinkling for immersion, and to substitute babies for believers. That he has the "FREEDOM" to believe one thing and practise another.

That he has the "FREEDOM" to sit in a College and teach error because he is paid handsomely for it, and yet sends out books that declare his own denomination is wrong.

The Dean has couched his reason in very plausible language, but an analysis reveals it to contain a most dangerous element, that is generally known by the name of "expediency" or "policy." Had he been a Baptist, he would not have needed to resort to a subtle form of speech, behind which to veil his inconsistency, nor thus to render an apology for departing from the Word of God; but he could have boldly and fearlessly challenged the world to have found any inconsistency between his belief and his practise. But being the great and rich Dean of Westminster, he felt that it was asking too much of him, to surrender his CHAIR in the Abbey with all its accompanying power and opulence, and to become a poor Baptist Minister for the sake of being consistent, so he manufactured a reason for NOT PRACTISING the Baptism of the New Testament, and practising a poor traditional substitute of man's invention.

The Dean's "policy" has been and still is, carried out to perfection by those great scholars, who teach one thing and practise another. "BY A WISE EXERCISE OF CHRISTIAN FREEDOM" they manage to vindicate their exact scholarship in their Lexicons, Commentaries, and Histories, by declaring that the original word used to designate baptism by our Lord, means to IMMERSE, and at the same time they succeed in holding on to the salaries they receive from Pedo-baptists Seats of Learning. That is certainly a hard thing to do, for it involves the disapprobation of both the Pedo-baptist ministers and of the Word of God.

One need not look far to see the results of the adoption of this "policy," in the religious world. "By a wise exercise of christian FREEDOM," the Unitarian strikes the Divinity of Christ out of his Creed; The Universalist imports the universal restoration of the lost souls; the Roman Catholic tacks on to his creed the worship of the Virgin Mary, and the silly doctrine of Purgatory. "By the wise exercise of christian FREEDOM," some churches allow their members to go with bare necks and arms, to engage in the impure and corrupt dance on Saturday night, and sit down at the

Lord's table on Sunday. In fact every corrupting ally of every professing christian church, has slipped in through that little hole, "A WISE EXERCISE OF CHRISTIAN FREEDOM," until what is called "CHRISTENDOM" to-day, is more like the great sheet Peter saw let down from heaven, "wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts and creeping things, and fowls of the air," than a body of holy men and women working, and watching and waiting for the coming of the Lord.

Let me now draw your attention to another great man, who if not a Dean, occupies as influential a position among the Congregationalists of the United States, as the Dean did among the Episcopalians of England. He stands every Sabbath in the most influential Congregational pulpit on this continent; and is also the Editor of a powerful religious Newspaper.

Dr. Lyman Abbott, the successor (pro tem) of Henry Ward Beecher, recently preached a sermon which shows he does not believe the doctrine of his own church, on the subject of infant baptism. Here is a paragraph that furnishes a pretty hard nut for Congregationalists to crack.

"The helpless infant lies in the arms of the mother, and the child by a PURE FICTION, is supposed to *renounce the world*; it is supposed to *believe in the Apostles Creed*; it is supposed to *exercise faith and repentance*; the promise and the renunciation and the experience being expressed for it by another. The Baptists are more logical. They say there is no way by which a child can be brought out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light, out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of Christ, out of this curse into this blessing, except by repentance and faith, and *no babe can exercise repentance and faith, and no man can exercise repentance and faith for the babe*. Therefore *we must wait until he is old enough to understand, and old enough to exercise repentance and faith*; *we must wait until he has come to years of discretion and intelligence, and then he must intelligently exercise faith and repentance for himself*, for there is no door of entrance into the kingdom of God, except the door of conversion by personal experience through repentance and faith. WE CON-

GREGATIONALISTS ARE NOT LOGICAL; we stand about half way between the Baptists and the Episcopalians. We baptize our children as the Episcopalians do, but we say that they cannot come into the church until they have experienced repentance and faith, as the Baptists say."

If a Congregationalist had read that paragraph in the papers, and had not known who preached it, he would have said, "Oh, that is from a sermon by a bigoted Baptist." But now we all know that it was preached from the pulpit of Plymouth Church, by one of the most famous Preachers and Editors of the Congregational body in the United States, what will they say? What can they say? Surely there is not a single Congregationalist this side the line, that would presume to set his opinion over against such a man as the celebrated Dr. Lyman Abbott?

Now let us see what this "ILLOGICALNESS" leads to. That other great Congregationalist Dr. Hopkins says, "No one is to be considered, and treated as a member of the church of Christ, unless he be baptized with water; **AS THIS IS THE ONLY DOOR** by which persons can be introduced into the visible kingdom of Christ, according to His own appointment." (see Curtiss on Communion, page 125).

The Congregationalists declare that baptism is the **ONLY DOOR** by which any one can come into their churches. They baptize (as they call sprinkling) their babies; those babies are accordingly members of their churches, and have a right to all the privileges of membership. They ought to take the Lord's Supper, vote in the church meetings, and help on the Lord's work generally; for all these things are obligations and privileges that belong to those who are members of churches, and certainly ought not be denied to those who have just become members. But now,—behold, the **ILLOGICALNESS** of the Congregationalists, immediately after making babies members of their churches *against their will*, they push them out of the churches *against their will*, and send them adrift into the world. They take the children into their churches by "**THE ONLY DOOR**" because they are "**BABIES**," and immediately turn them out because they are "**NOT CONVERTED**." Well may the great Dr. Ly-

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man Abbott say, "WE CONGREGATIONALISTS ARE NOT LOGICAL," and truly has he also said, "THE BAPTISTS ARE MORE LOGICAL."

I suppose the Dr *meant* that the Baptists are more "SCRIPTURAL," but that would be granting them a little too much, and would belittle his own body beyond endurance. Nevertheless any child can see that is the logical conclusion one must draw from the doctor's premises.

That great English Congregationalist Dr. John Campbell, in a "PRIZE ESSAY" for which he was awarded one hundred guineas by the Committee of the English "Congregational Union" declared that "AS THINGS NOW GENERALLY STAND, THE PEDO-BAPTIST THEORY IS ALTOGETHER WITHOUT A PARTICLE OF PRACTICE, BEYOND THE EFFUSION OF WATER; IT IS EVERY WAY UNPROFITABLE, AND NOTHING SUPPORTS IT BUT BLIND CUSTOM."

Now why did not Dr. Campbell give up that "BLIND CUSTOM," and practise what he believed to be the baptism of the New Testament? And why does not Dr. Abbott honor his conscience and obey the Word of God, by practising what he knows to be the ONLY baptism in the New Testament? The only guess I can make that seems a good one, is that, "BY A WISE EXERCISE OF CHRISTIAN FREEDOM," Dr. Abbott prefers his twenty thousand dollars a year and alliance with error, to a quarter that sum with the New Testament on his side.

An Open Letter to my Critics.

GENTLEMEN:—

I am sorry to know that my sermons on baptism have aroused angry feelings in your hearts. That was not the intended effect, but I had hoped to have awakened a spirit of free and honest enquiry. And if the reverse of my hopes are realized, I am not to be blamed for the result, for it was through a Pede-baptist that the sermons were preached. This winter, many young people, brought up in six other denominations, strayed into the First Baptist Church meetings; and I am happy to be able to say that (among them five young men and three young women) testified that they had experienced a change of heart. They came of their own free will, and God blessed His word to their souls. One of these had serious thoughts of joining the Baptist Church, but was not satisfied as to the consistency of "Close Communion." One of that person's companions called on me and told me that that young convert fully believed that believer's baptism by immersion was the only baptism in the New Testament, but could not understand close communion, and would I give an address on the subject. The sermon on "Close Communion" was therefore the result of Pede-baptists having been converted in our church.

In not one of my sermons is there any expressed or intended unkind feelings towards any one, but simply straightforward statements on what we believe, and why we differ from others on the subjects discussed. In them cannot be found a single statement that reflects on any individual in Yarmouth, but only an honest discussion of the different baptisms practised by the different bodies here represented. Now if any minister or layman desires to answer my sermons, let him do so in the same way I have pursued, and in the same spirit I have exhibited.

Why should not our differences be freely and calmly discussed? Is it not by such means that the best conclusions are reached in the Legislature? And what a farce a trial in court would be were the lawyers prohibited free and open debate? Then seeing there is such a wide divergence between us on the solemn subject of baptism, why should not our

practises be subjected to the same sifting process? Any child can see that that was the method our Lord adopted with both friends and foes. With Pharisees, disciples, or heathen, he held long and interesting discussions, reasoning with them concerning His creed and theirs in a free and open manner. And in many cases, those who were convinced that His was better than theirs, will thank God through all eternity for the light they received during those discussions.

Behold the Prince of Reasoners in the synagogue, and on Mars Hill, what glorious results followed his discussions! What was the Reformation but the result, through God's blessing, of long and earnest discussions in which mental and spiritual giants, such as Wicliff and Luther took part? Whereas it is the essence of Romanism to shun and to suppress free and open discussion on the greatest of all themes, Christian Truths. Free and frank discussion will always do good, if conducted in the right spirit and with God's glory in view, and the Baptists are never afraid of it, in fact they rather court it, for there was never a discussion on Baptism yet that did not add to their number. But to a kind of Guerilla warfare, all straightforward people object. One minister of this town told me, that he took one of my sermons into his pulpit, and after discussing its contents said, "I am surprised that such brazen-faced ignorance should be tolerated." On remonstrating with him for such abuse he promised to apologize for using the word "brazen-faced," but he never did so. If that gentleman (?) differed from me in the morals or the scholarship of that sermon, why could he not discuss freely and frankly the differences between us in a christian gentlemanly way. Why should he so far forget both his influence and his position, as to use language more fit for the saloon than the sanctuary, more becoming to a pugilist than a preacher? When a public teacher of morals will open his sermon on baptism, by stating that his sermon is NOT A REPLY to any body as he sees no "ground" for a reply, and then proceeds to try to prove that some of my statements are wrong, ordinary people naturally conclude that that gentleman is guilty of telling falsehoods. Would he have preached on that subject? And would

his people have studied to advertise that the rev. gentleman was going to deliver himself on that theme? and would his people have so cordially invited so many of my people, who went to hear him on that very topic? If I had not preached on baptism the previous two Sundays? I think any ordinary jury would convict him of falsehood, on the ground of the evidence at hand. If that gentleman felt that I had misrepresented the creed and practises of the pedit-baptists, why could he not with gentlemanly courtesy, reply to my sermons by presenting freely and frankly his "views" on the subject and publish them? Instead of which, he declares he is not going to answer any body, then preaches a sermon in which he makes distinct references to parts of my sermon, and crowns his discourse by ridiculing the ordinance of believer's baptism, by declaring that the Eunuch did not go on his way DRIPPING, but rejoicing. Every body can discern that a SNEER is not an ARGUMENT, and that a made up little anecdote about a big man and a little man quarrelling over a fence is a poor substitute for sound reasoning. All we ask of our Critics is Truthful, Manly, Sound Reasoning backed up by the Word of God, and not Ridicule, Sneers, and Abuse, and I will ensure them reasonable answers couched in language becoming a minister of the Gospel.

In reply to Rev. J. Gaetz I may say, that from the Methodist Book of Discipline, and the Methodists greatest historian on this continent, I understood that baptism is an essential to communion. This is what the "Book of Discipline" says, "Baptism is not only a sign of profession and MARK OF DIFFERENCE, WHEREBY CHRISTIANS ARE DISTINGUISHED FROM OTHERS THAT ARE NOT BAPTIZED; but it is also a sign of regeneration, or the New Birth." The straightforward logical conclusion of that tenet is, that those who are not baptized have not the MARK that distinguishes them as christians; and I did not suppose that any Methodist would allow that rule to be broken in the participation of so solemn an ordinance as the Lord's Supper.

Now listen to Dr. F. G. Hibbard the great Methodist interpreter of Methodist doctrine. In his famous book on "Christian Baptism," page 174 of part II, he says, "Before

entering upon the argument before us, it is but just to remark that, IN ONE PRINCIPLE, the Baptists and Pede-baptists AGREE. THEY BOTH AGREE IN REJECTING FROM THE COMMUNION AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD, AND IN DENYING THE RIGHTS OF CHURCH FELLOWSHIP, TO ALL WHO HAVE NOT BEEN BAPTIZED." With such an interpreter of Methodist doctrine as Dr. Hibbard, I have all I want to support my assertion.

With regard to Mr. Gaetz's references to English Baptists, I have simply to say that the three millions of baptized believers on this continent, have no more to "SETTLE" with the English BAPTISTS, than they have to settle with the English WESLEYANS. The English Baptists are mostly open communionists, and to-day they are (Mr. Spurgeon included) opening their eyes to the fact that while *they* have grown to only *three hundred thousand in several centuries*, the *Close Com Baptists* on this continent have grown to *three millions in a little over one century*. There, open communion Baptist churches have been so largely patronized by the pedo-baptists, that in some cases the Baptist features have vanished, and they are virtually governed by the Pede-baptists, who have been enjoying all the same privileges of members of the church. Not a few have become "Union Churches." John Bunyan's old Church at Bedford is now a Congregational Church.

Mr. Gaetz closes his letter to the "Times" by saying, "When our brother has settled the question of close communion with his baptist brethren (meaning the English Baptists) we may be inclined to pursue the subject further; NOT TILL THEN."

But Mr. Gaetz, what have *you* to do with the *English* Baptists? That is throwing sand in the eyes of the people. That is like a man trying to draw the eyes of a crowd off who are looking at the Sun, by the flying of a kite. It may appear to the unwary very ingenious, but thoughtful minds who look for ARGUMENTS in your letter will perceive that your reference to the free-communion Baptists of England, is *simply a bit of sentimentalism*, tacked on to *draw the minds* of the people away from the *great question* at issue

between us. And what is the main question? it is this. I have proved in my sermons that *we* do not invite *you* to the Lord's supper because if *you* have been only *sprinkled* *you* have not been baptized, and according to Dr. Hibbard's teaching, *those who have not been baptized have no right to the Lord's Supper*. I have on the other hand proved according to the greatest Pedit-baptist scholars that *immersion was the original mode of baptism, that only those who have been immersed are really baptized, therefore that only such as have been immersed have a right to the Lord's Supper*. Now, instead of carefully avoiding the great question, will you please set to work and prove that *our Lord was sprinkled*, that *He commanded His disciples to sprinkle*, and please give us a *single instance of an infant being sprinkled in the New Testament*; and then I will at once, not only invite you to the Lord's table, but I will compete with you in the work of sprinkling all the infants that come along.

One of my ministerial critics said lately that there is no doubt that Jesus Christ was immersed, and another said that He was not immersed at all. We certainly are nearing a solution of this baptism problem.